

**WASHINGTONIANA DIVISION
D.C. COMMUNITY ARCHIVES**

**Guide to the Records of the
Washington Womens Arts Center, 1972-1988**

**Collection No. 4
52 linear ft.**

August 1998

D.C. Public Library
Washingtoniana Division
D.C. Community Archives
901 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
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**Guide to the Records of the
Washington Womens Arts Center
Collection No. 4**

PROVENANCE: The records were donated by Marcia Pemberton and Pamela Brown, members of the Washington Womens Arts Center in 1989.

HISTORY: Two events in metropolitan Washington, D.C. area were the primary catalysts for the Washington Womens Arts Center -- The Conference of Women in the Visual Arts held April 20-22, 1972 at the Corcoran Gallery; and Womansphere, an arts festival held at Glen Echo Park, Maryland in 1974. The Conference attracted significant women artists from around the country, including Elaine deKooning, Katherine Anne Porter, Lois M. Jones, and Judy Chicago. The conference steering committee consisted of Mary Beth Edelson, Cynthia Bickley-Green, Barbara Frank, Enid Sandford, Susan Sollins, Josephine Withers, and Yvonne Wulf. Participants were concerned about the presentation and involvement of so few women artists in the Corcoran's Biennial Exhibition and other exhibitions at major U.S. art galleries. As a result of these events, local women who attended began discussing and planning for a D.C. women arts center.

The Center was established in 1975 to provide a place for Washington, D.C. women to show their work, improve their artistic skills, and develop their artistic professionalism. The original founders included Barbara Frank, Katherine Butler, Janis Goodman, Sarah Hyde, and Ann Slayton-Leffler. The site of the first Center was in a renovated basement at 1821 Q Street, N.W. The Center sponsored a monthly series of lectures and published a journal, *Womansphere*. It also conducted workshops, and held literary readings, live performances, and gallery talks. The primary concentration of the Center was sponsoring juried exhibits of local women artists. In 1983 the Center moved to the Lansburgh Cultural Center. The Center closed in the late 1980s.

PROCESSING PROCEDURES

General processing procedures consisted of discarding duplicates, unnecessary binders, and routine transmittals. Oversized documents and photographs were removed from the original location in their assigned series and placed in separate containers. Separation sheets were inserted in the original location within the folder to indicate the new location of any records placed elsewhere.

Preservation copying of newspaper clippings was performed whenever feasible. Records in folders were arranged, unless otherwise indicated, in forward chronological order, with undated records appearing at the end of the folder

RESTRICTIONS: Must obtain permission from artist before reproducing any image of the artist's work.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Contains general administrative files that include correspondence, Board meeting minutes, annuals reports, contracts, insurance policies, and grant files. A substantial amount of financial documentation such as Center budgets, receipts, ledgers, financial statements, deposit sheets, and cash books. Also contains records which document the Center's history and membership such as guest books, membership directories, and documentation of the Women's Conference in the Visual Arts of 1972. Publications such as *Womensphere*, the Center's published journal, and issues of its newsletter are included. Contains records documenting exhibits mounted at the Center such as exhibition lists, resumes, printed programs, and publicity materials. Also contains audiovisual materials, including audiorecordings, videorecordings, slides, and photographs of events and exhibits at the Center.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I: Historical materials, 1972-1979 (1 linear ft.)

Correspondence and financial documents relating to the Women's Conference in the Visual Arts of 1972. Also contains correspondence and other items regarding the first site location, early publicity, proposals, and studies to establish the Center.

Series II: Board of Directors, 1974-87 (1.75 linear ft.)

Contains the Center's Board of Directors meeting minutes, annual reports, incorporation papers, and by-laws of the Center. Projected budgets from 1978 through 1987 are also among the records.

Series III: Office Files, 1976-1986 (3.75 linear ft.)

This series contains correspondence, memoranda, brochures, press releases, and reports regarding such topics as government and foundation grants, publicity, elections, Center workshops, the Lansburgh Center move, and the Edith C. Blum lecture series.

Series IV: Financial Records, 1975-1978 (13.5 linear ft.)

This series contains correspondence, budgets, ledgers, receipts, insurance policies, financial statements, gallery cash daybook, and other financial information. The records also cover grants from the D.C. Government and the National Education Association.

Series V: Membership and Guestbooks, 1977-1987 (1.25 linear ft.)

Contains records which document individuals which supported and attended the Center's activities, including membership directories, guestbooks for Center events, an address book

(1980), card index of active members (1987), and cards index of inactive members (1988).

Series VI: Newsletters, 1975-1981 (2.5 linear ft.)

This series contains copies of the Center's newsletter, "WWAC News."

Series VII: Exhibitions Files, 1975-1988 (22.5 linear ft.)

Contains materials which document the preparation and publicity for exhibitions at the Center. Materials are arranged under three subseries.

Subseries 1: Office files, 1975-1988 (5.5 linear ft.)

Exhibition office files which contain correspondence, handwritten lists, contracts, clippings, publicity, some photographs, and resumes between the Center and the artist as well as others involved in planning for exhibitions.

Subseries 2: Notebooks, 1977-1985 (14.5 linear ft.)

Loose-leaf notebooks of all final documentation on each exhibit. They contain photographs, correspondence, resumes, lists of items in exhibitions, slides, and clips from the publications, including the Center's newsletter, *Womansphere*, and *Artist Outreach*.

Subseries 3: Exhibition catalogs and programs, 1976-1987 (3 linear ft.)

Contain printed exhibit catalogs and programs from each exhibit. It also contains programs from other activities at the Center and other institutions.

Series VIII: Audiovisual, 1972-1989 (.5 linear ft.)

This series contains slides, videocassettes, audiocassettes, and photographs of exhibits, performances, and other events at the Center.

Series IX: Memorabilia, undated (.25 linear ft.)

Contains a textile banner with the Center's name and various framed items from the Center's offices. It also includes miscellaneous publications of other arts organizations.

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